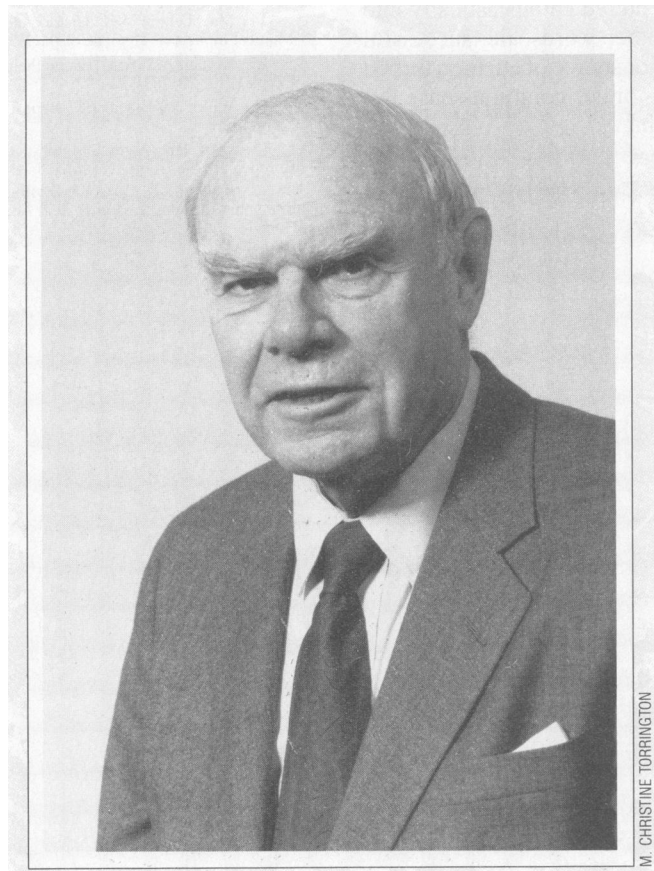


**A TRIBUTE TO  
MALCOLM S. M. WATTS, MD**



**EDITOR  
1968-1990**

# Special Editorials

## A Tribute to MSMW

AFTER TWENTY-TWO YEARS, A VERY ABLE, THOUGHTFUL, AND WISE PHYSICIAN LAYS DOWN HIS EDITORIAL PEN.

MALCOLM WATTS, who for over 22 years has edited the official journal of the California Medical Association—*California Medicine* and subsequently *The Western Journal of Medicine*—retires as editor in the first half of 1990. He has done a remarkable job and brought *The Western Journal of Medicine*, which is now also the official journal of the medical associations of Arizona, Denver, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Washington, Utah, and Wyoming, to the point where it is one of the best general medical journals published in this country. Far-ranging and yet practical, it is informative for physicians in practice and, at the same time, reflects much of what goes on in medicine in the West.

In a sense, Malcolm Watts had a perfect background to occupy an editorial chair. He had had extensive experience in the private practice of internal medicine in San Francisco, accumulated a substantial bibliography, developed a gradually growing and then prevailing interest in continuing medical education in an academic setting and in the California Medical Association, and a leavening experience in organized medicine as president of the San Francisco Medical Society and of the American Society of Internal Medicine. All of this experience was well salted with a wide interest and active participation in the "Role of Medicine in Society," with its broad implications and increasing importance in the ethical aspects of medicine.

The wisdom he has developed he has expressed very well in the editorials in *The Western Journal of Medicine* signed MSMW, and likewise he has shared it with the Scientific Board and the Council of the California Medical Association. Ably assisted in the academic and scientific fields by Holly Smith, the associate editor of *The Western Journal of Medicine* for the same 22 years, the team of Watts and Smith has made a very important contribution to the continuing medical education of the profession in the western United States and indeed throughout the country.

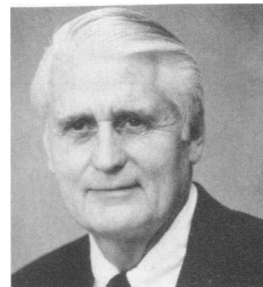
As we bid our editorial good-bye to Malcolm Watts, let us keep in mind how long and successfully he has carried out his editorial duties and how much he has done for the medical associations in the West. He has been a giant in medicine, and *The Western Journal of Medicine* will long stand as a monument to his efforts.



IT IS A PRIVILEGE for me to have this chance to make a few comments about my close friend and long-term colleague, Mal Watts. I thought that I would start with a standard official delineation of his professional pedigree.

Mal is a New York Scot, as reflected in the nomenclature of his antecedents—Watts, Stuart, McNeal, Forbes. After attending Trinity School in New York, he scurried north to Harvard for both his undergraduate and his medical degrees, the latter in the auspicious year of 1941. After a year of internship at Bellevue Hospital (Cornell Service), he was caught up in World War II, entering the Army Medical Corps as a 1st Lieutenant but emerging as a Major. The war mobilized Mal from his Eastern habitat and revealed to him the splendors of California, whose praises had already been seductively sung by his classmate and friend, Herbert Moffitt. Clearly the lesson was heeded, for he promptly returned from Army duties to residency training at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), and soon after to marriage with Genevieve Moffitt. Fortunately for us, he has been sessile here ever since. The Good Book states that the "Wise men commeth from the East"—but clearly the object of their adoration lay in the West. It was similarly true for the wise Scot from the New York-Boston axis.

I shall not write of Mal's entering the practice of medicine with Dwight Wilbur, after the completion of his chief residency. It is interesting to note, however, that Mal's first three publications were co-authored with Dwight, who has been a lasting influence in his life. Mal continued in the private practice of internal medicine for almost 30 years, until his increasing responsibilities with the University of California obviated that time commitment. I cannot begin to summarize Mal's many contributions to UCSF, which started when he was a resident and which continue to this day. The university quickly recognized his gifts as a leader so that even in his early days of faculty membership, he was given major academic responsibilities in the Dean's Office—best described as "Dean For External Affairs." These external affairs he handled quietly and adroitly, as indeed he has everything else that comes his way. In 1983 he received the UCSF Medal, the highest honor that the University can bestow, in recognition of his signal contributions to health education, community health care, and public service. A few months ago Chancellor Julius R. Krevans and many of his university colleagues sponsored a special dinner for Mal and his family in further recognition of his invaluable academic legacy.



The university has had to share Mal, however, with many other entities. To list a few, he has been president of the San Francisco Medical Society, of the American Society of Internal Medicine, and of the Alliance for Continuing Medical Education. On a more bibulous theme, it should be noted that he has also been president of the Society of Medical Friends of Wine. I shall not attempt to summarize his many other contributions to this community, to the state, and to the nation.

In this issue we are celebrating only one phase of Mal's multifaceted life—his editorship since 1968 of this medical journal, a stretch of more than 22 years. In some ways that seems a short period of time, because I have shared those years with him and, like all good things, they have seemed to whistle by all too quickly. On the other hand, we can say that Mal has been editor for more than 10% of the duration of our nation! But longevity, although noteworthy, is not what we celebrate. We are celebrating high achievements and the exceptional personal attributes that underlie them. Under his leadership this journal has improved remarkably, both before and after its transmogrification in 1974 from *California Medicine* to the more spacious scope of *The Western Journal of Medicine*. These changes are a matter of public record. I would rather comment briefly on style. Good fun and a sense of high adventure have always fueled our editorial meetings rather than the sober lash of requisite responsibilities. Remarkably, much was accomplished with convivial give-and-take around a noontime table at Trader Vic's, although I should probably not reveal this departure from austerity to our financial overlords. Although Mal always carried the ultimate responsibility, his openness allowed all of his associates, of which I was privileged to be one, a keen and exhilarating sense of participation.

Among the many other new ideas that Mal brought to the journal was that of the Epitomes, pithy summaries of various advances in medicine. Unfortunately, I cannot capture the essence of Mal Watts in this verbal Epitome. But of the many words that come to mind the one that seems most appropriate is integrity—intellectual integrity in his approach to his profession and to the problems that lie on the interface between medicine and society; personal integrity in his interactions with others in all walks of life. The Greek conception of happiness was: "The exercise of vital powers along lines of excellence in a life affording them scope." In this issue we salute a man who has exercised those vital powers superbly well and whose own life has uniquely encompassed that scope. Fortunately for Linda Clever and me, Mal will remain as a honored colleague with *The Western Journal of Medicine*. More important, he will remain, as he has always been, a distinguished physician, a wise counselor, and a warm friend.

At the journal we were very concerned about finding a suitable gift to mark the official end of Mal's distinguished editorship. We finally decided to give him a uniquely valuable gift—to return to him the tangible essence of his own wisdom. How better could this have been expressed than in a bound copy of over 250 editorial gems with which he has graced the journal and edified our profession over 22 years? Though thus collected, they also remain dispersed in libraries throughout the world for the benefit of future generations of physicians.

LLOYD H. SMITH, Jr, MD

IF HE WERE A LIST-MAKER, Malcolm Stuart McNeal Watts would have volumes of lists. He could have a list of the titles of all of his editorials in *The Western Journal of Medicine*—more than 250 over the last 22 years. Mal never missed a beat; he never missed an issue. He could have a list of all of the physicians in California, and beyond, who know and respect him. That list itself would fill volumes because, in addition to his *WJM* editorship, he also brought public and private universities to the front lines of practice (and vice versa) via his long and hard work with Regional Medical Programs and Area Health Education Centers. Mal visited virtually every urban and rural practice site throughout California during his years of work in those two vineyards. Mal could also have a list, if he were boastful, which he is not, of all of the physicians for whom he has served as mentor. His integrity, insights, tenacity, broad world view; his ability to communicate and inspire action; his determination to do the right thing despite risk and sometimes pain have served as examples to his colleagues, young and old, for years. Some of the most effective people on local, regional, and national medical scenes today would not be as effective without Mal's example and sponsorship.

Mal Watts's own list of accomplishments includes, of course, the journal. He also lists the development of the concept of the California Medical Association's Scientific Advisory Panels, which represent the scientific and educational concerns of each specialty section and maintain professional standards through sponsorship of educational meetings at the association's annual meeting, furnish editorial consultation to the journal, and provide advice on scientific matters. Mal also recalls with pleasure that he brought medical students into the California Medical Association (CMA). His interest in young people stimulated successful integration of not only medical students but house officers into the structure and function of organized medicine.

As Holly Smith has mentioned, Mal has a remarkable and distinguished history: Trinity School, Harvard undergraduate and medical schools, Bellevue internship, University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), residency. After his army service during World War II—he's the first to admit that Seattle was not a hard-duty station—he went into practice with Dwight Wilbur, also one of the giants of American medicine of this century, who had taken over the editorship of *California Medicine* in 1946. Dwight nourished and expanded that journal and saw that there were even greater opportunities ahead. He feels that his greatest accomplishment was persuading Mal Watts and Lloyd H. Smith, Jr, then Chief of Medicine at UCSF, to become editor and associate editor, respectively, upon his retirement. Dwight has also left an imprint on the CMA itself, not only the journal. He chaired the ad hoc committee of the CMA Council that recommended the establishment of the Scientific Board to strengthen and formalize all scientific and educational activities conducted by the CMA.

Through the years, and even more so recently, Mal has had many awards and honors, including innumerable standing ovations. He is a member of the American Association for



the Advancement of Sciences, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, and the California Academy of Medicine. He is a Clinical Professor at UCSF and was Associate Dean for 24 years. He is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians. He is on the Council of Biology Editors, is a member of the American Medical Writers Association, and shows his avocational interest by also being a member of the Society of Medical Friends of Wine. He has served volunteer stints on numerous boards, including the United Bay Area Crusade, Cathedral School, and the Rosenberg Foundation. He was elected to the CMA Council five years before he became editor of *The Western Journal of Medicine* and, as a member of the Council, of the Scientific Board, and the House of Delegates, has made a difference. He also writes for the *AMA News* and is incubating more editorials and a book. As editor of the journal, he is a member of the Vancouver Group, the international society of editors of distinguished medical journals. The United States has four rep-

resentatives—the editors of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *JAMA*, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, and *WJM*.

A person is more than accomplishments. Mal is devoted to the symphony—and has good seats. He enjoys home and hearth and family. He is great of spirit. He is magnanimous, fair, constructive, optimistic yet realistic, and patient. And, fortunately for all of us, he is witty. Finally, he is charitable. The worst thing I have ever heard him say about anyone was that he was “one of a kind.”

Malcolm Stuart McNeal Watts, too, is “one of a kind”—one of the best kind.

We all have a challenge ahead—and that is to hold the light of the journal high so it can continue to shine brightly, so it can continue to serve our patients and profession in science, in health, in public policy; so it can continue to inform and inspire. We are building on a firm foundation—43 years with two editors. Despite predictable and unpredictable problems, the journal will prevail.

LINDA HAWES CLEVER, MD